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CLEMATIS LAWSONIANA

How to Grow CLEMATIS

The Clematis hybrids are for the most part hardy and are not difficult to grow if a few simple requirements are followed. In fact, there are few gardeners who cannot provide proper situations and soil conditions to grow these hardy vines. Own-root plants are preferable to grafted specimens; our plants are all the two-year, own-root kind.

LOCATION. Like most hardy plants, Clematis grows best in well-drained soil. In fact, it will not tolerate a place where its feet are wet. The Clematis prefers a moist root run, which can be provided by planting the plant on the shady side of a fence or wall. Or if in full sun, low-growing perennials or shrubs may be planted to provide the desired shade around the roots. For example, the new hybrid daylilies might well be combined effectively with many of the Clematis hybrids. To conserve moisture, a mulch of well-rotted cow-manure or peat is easy to apply and very helpful.

One of the outstanding features of the hybrid Clematis is their adaptability. Like all vines, they need support. It can be a trellis, an arbor, a pergola, a fence or a garden wall. In any event, they must be trained so that the tops are in full sun for the maximum amount of bloom. This requirement is no hardship since most home gardeners need vines to soften and enclose unattractive structures.

SOIL. Clematis grows best in rich garden loam. If you are not certain about the condition of your soil, it will be well worth your while to dig a hole at least 18 inches deep and as wide. Fill in with well-prepared soil enriched by adding decomposed stable manure. The Clematis seems to be very partial to alkaline soils. If you are in doubt about the condition of your soil, be sure to add lime—a generous handful can be dug in for each plant. One or two applications of a complete fertilizer during the spring months is desirable. (Use the same quantity you would for any individual plant. Scatter it carefully around the plant and dig it in, being careful not to injure the stems and base of the plant.)

Planting

Clematis may be planted in the spring or fall. The same general practices are applicable to both planting seasons.

SPRING. Set the plant in place without breaking the ball of soil. If the plant is received bare, spread the roots carefully, setting the crown at least 2 inches

below the surface. Firm soil well around roots. Tie the canes to a small stake or whatever permanent support you may plan to train your Clematis to. This precaution is taken to prevent injury from wind and ice or from being bruised while you are working near them. To protect the collar of the plant from injury, many gardeners slip a 4-inch pipe over the plant when setting it out or use a wire collar.

FALL. It is a good plan to mulch Clematis set out in the fall. This is easily done by hilling the soil up around the roots to a height of 6 inches. This protection or the use of a collar prevents damage from rodents.

PRUNING. For the first two years little pruning is necessary with most of the Clematis hybrids. When the vines begin to attain size they will need to be pruned in early spring by removing old and dead wood. Summer and fall-blooming kinds should be pruned in early March. Those that flower in spring need their pruning even earlier. Take out only the dead wood because these hybrids bloom on old wood (the previous year's growth). Each spring the summer-flowering kinds may be cut back to 3 to 4 feet from the ground.



Clematis Henryi



Set crown 2 inches below ground level



Firm soil well around roots



Fall planting—hill up soil

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